

# OVERTON GRANGE SCHOOL POLICY

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Govs. Comm. CURRICULUM & STUDENT

### Reason for the policy

The school is responsible for supporting the attendance of its students and for responding to difficulties and issues which might lead to non-attendance.

The school will adopt a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourage parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children, which can play a major role in improving levels of attendance and punctuality and in reducing absenteeism.

### What is the policy going to do?

#### Promote good attendance and punctuality:

We expect all students (Years 7 – 13) to aim for 100% attendance and punctuality.

Attendance of below 90% is cause for concern. An attendance of 90% means that the equivalent of **one day every fortnight** is being missed due to absence. An attendance of 80% means that a **full year's education** would be lost between Years 7 and 11. Research shows that there is a strong correlation between good attendance and examination success.

**Punctuality:** All students should have a 100% punctuality records. Only lateness for exceptional reasons will be excused. Regular lateness is unacceptable.

### Meet legal requirements

It is a legal requirement that schools will:-

- a) be open to all pupils for 380 sessions each school year;
- b) maintain attendance registers (either manual or computerised) in accordance with the relevant regulations. Overton Grange School will also maintain a separate Persistent Absentees (PA) register and will monitor PA as a discrete category of absenteeism;
- c) accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness;
- d) clearly distinguish between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised according to criteria laid down by the DFE (the school will remind parents that it is the decision of the headteacher as to whether or not an absence will be authorised);
- e) submit termly absence returns through School Census and publish information relating to levels of attendance and absence and include details of these in the school's prospectus and annual report;.

- f) set annual targets to reduce absence and to reduce levels of persistent absenteeism and submit these targets in accordance with the relevant regulations.

### **How is the policy going to be put into practice?**

The school will

- a) give a high priority and value to attendance and punctuality and ensure that specific strategies are in place in order to achieve this;
- b) ensure compliance with all relevant statutory requirements (particularly with regard to the maintenance of attendance registers and the setting of targets);
- c) implement clear attendance procedures, which identify a range of both proactive and reactive strategies to promote good attendance/ punctuality and to address absenteeism, especially persistent absenteeism;
- d) ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents through the school brochure, through newsletters, through parents' evenings or through other media; (parents should be specifically reminded of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance);
- e) collect and make effective use of attendance data to monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement – for individuals, classes, year groups and the whole school;
- f) provide clear guidance to staff on the practice of registration and on such connected issues as the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- g) identify clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness (allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities);
- h) recognise the crucial importance of early intervention and provide appropriate strategies;
- i) make provision for first-day of absence contact, particularly in relation to students who are known to be poor attenders or who might otherwise be considered to be at risk;
- j) monitor post-registration truancy through the taking of class registers and spot checks and ensure that the parents of any post-registration truants are promptly informed and where necessary actively involved;
- k) be alert to critical times (e.g. Key Stage 3/4 transfer);
- l) identify a range of both proactive and reactive strategies to promote attendance and address absenteeism, especially persistent absenteeism;
- m) develop attendance incentive schemes which recognise students' attendance achievements;
- n) set up effective networks for liaising with other involved agencies and services such as Children's Social Care, the Police, Health, etc;

- o) establish procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees and students who may, for specific reasons, have been on a reduced timetable;
- p) identify an interesting, flexible, and accessible curriculum which encourages regular attendance;
- q) provide for regular structured meetings for key school staff and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- r) ensure that reasonable steps are taken by the school before a referral is made to the Borough School Attendance Service
- s) stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time:
 

*School holiday dates are published a year in advance and it is strongly advised that parents/carers book their family holidays during the school holidays. School will not authorise holidays during term time and any such absences will be recorded as unauthorised. Penalty notices may be issued for holidays taken during term time.*
- t) issue penalty notices and follow other relevant legal processes to discourage poor attendance/punctuality (see appendix 1) where appropriate
- u) identify a link governor for attendance;
- v) identify a key senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance;
- w) ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated;
- x) help create an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance, addressing school-based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism, an inappropriate curriculum, etc.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

- Termly report to governors in relation to attendance targets

### **Appendix**

- Penalty Notices

## Attendance Policy Appendix 1

### Penalty Notice

Overton Grange School, working in conjunction with the London Borough of Sutton, may issue a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the provision of the Education Act 1996 and the Education Inspection Act, 2006, as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £120, payable within 28 days of receipt of the notice. This amount is reduced to £60 per parent, per child if paid within the first 21 days. These powers add to the local authority's existing powers to enforce attendance. Cases of persistent unauthorised absences will remain subject to action under the wider powers of the Education Act 1996 which include prosecution and a criminal record should legal proceedings be instigated.

### Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.

- Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for five days or more without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child**. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
- Where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the half-term (this can include late arrival after the close of registration where the U symbol has been used denoting unauthorised absence). The lateness will be recorded in accordance with the 'Registration and Lateness' section of this policy.

**With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences, including truancy, are recorded on a student's registration certificate, which may be used as a point of reference for future employers, colleges or universities.

### Absences that the school is unable to authorise include:

- Arrival after the register has closed, i.e. 9.00am onwards.
- Shopping trips, even if this is for school uniform.
- Treat days out.
- Looking after a relative/pet.
- Trips to the hairdresser/other non medical related appointments.
- Inability to participate in a school activity.
- Tiredness due to extra-curricular activities.

Where there are ongoing concerns about school attendance, the school may request that parents/carers provide medical evidence before absences can be authorised

**OVERTON GRANGE SCHOOL**  
**Attendance procedures (2019 onwards)**

<p><b>Stage 1</b> All students</p>	<p>Tutors complete registers on time each day – am and pm.</p> <p>Tutors follow up any absences. When phone calls/letter are received to explain absences, tutors record appropriate mark on SIMS.</p> <p><b>Tutors must call home on the first day of any absence – even if parents have left a message with the school office.</b></p> <p><b>Head of Year calls home for periods of absence of more than 3 days – or if ongoing concerns about attendance. HoY makes decision whether to move to stage 2.</b></p> <p><b><i>NB: no absences of more than 5 days will be authorised without medical evidence</i></b></p> <p>When a student returns to school after any absence, tutor has conversation with them to clarify reasons for absence, to ask for note/medical evidence as appropriate and to check if any ongoing issues which may impact on attendance</p> <p>Tutors use SIMS to monitor attendance of their tutor groups. At least one tutor time a week should be used to talk to students individually about any attendance issues – and to reinforce/praise good attendance.</p> <p>Text alerts sent out daily. Responses recorded by appropriate register mark</p>	<p>Tutors HoYs Office</p>
<p><b>Stage 2</b> Attendance concerns</p>	<p>HoYs receive fortnightly print out from EWO for 96% and below (copied to tutor team)</p> <p>HoYs review list and discuss and agreed action with tutors (and SENCO) where appropriate. Action may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone call home</li> <li>• Letter home</li> <li>• Meeting with parents/carers</li> <li>• Parent/student/school contract</li> </ul> <p>HoYs meet fortnightly with EWO and decide action for any concerns. Action may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard letter sent expressing concern</li> <li>• Standard letter sent requesting medical evidence</li> <li>• Meeting with HoY/tutor and parents. Notes kept on pro-forma and sent to parents</li> <li>• Referral to EWO – letter sent to notify parents. Referral completed for EWO – attach letters, notes of meetings, and phone calls.</li> <li>• Parent/student/school contract</li> <li>• Referral to DHT (Pastoral)</li> </ul>	<p>HoYs Office EWO</p>
<p><b>Stage 3</b> Persistent concerns</p>	<p>Long term and persistent attendance issues may be referred by HoY to DHT (Pastoral), to be followed up in liaison with EWO and Borough School Attendance Service. Action may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting</li> <li>• Request for medical evidence for future absences.</li> <li>• Referral to appropriate agency for support</li> <li>• PN warning issued by EWO/BSAS</li> <li>• PN issued by EWO/BSAS</li> <li>• Legal proceedings instigated by EWO with support from BSAS</li> </ul>	<p>HoYs Office EWO DHT</p>

Letters will be sent home each half term from HoYs (generated by DHT) to parents of students with more than 5 incidents of being late to school

***Sixth form attendance procedures are outlined in the 6<sup>th</sup> form tutor handbook***